

Selfridge Field,
Building #1582, #1583, #1584,
(Prefabricated Building) (Old Rod and Gun Club)
South of East of Joy Blvd., west of Taxiway C
~~Harrison Township~~ Mt. Clemens Vicinity
Macomb County
Michigan

HAER No. MI-116-YY

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
GREAT LAKES SYSTEMS OFFICE
1709 JACKSON STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-2571

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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SELFRIDGE FIELD
BUILDING #1582, #1583, #1584
(PREFABRICATED BUILDING)
(Old Rod and Gun Club)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Location: East of Northwest Gate, west of Taxiway C
Selfridge Air National Guard Base
Mt. Clemens vicinity, Macomb County, Michigan

Quad/UTM: U.S.G.S. Mount Clemens East Quadrangle, Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
17.348400.4718760 (#1582)
17.348430.4718760 (#1583)
17.348380.4718760 (#1584)

Date of Construction: 1955

Present Owner: Air National Guard
3500 Fetchet Avenue
Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland 20762

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: Buildings #1582, #1583 and #1584 were erected to support crews manning the 661st Radar units which provided long range search and identification radar to North American Air Defense (NORAD) for continuous surveillance of the North America to protect against nuclear attack. Although in a state of advanced deterioration, this is the only prefabricated personnel support complex surviving at this complex. It was an important locus in the daily regimen of personnel associated with the Army radar complexes and therefore illustrates an important facet of Selfridge's Cold War defense mission.

Historian: William Rutter, Midwest Environmental Consultants,
May, 1996

II. HISTORY

Buildings #1582-1584 were erected in 1955 and Building #1585 was erected in 1954¹ north of the southwest Nike Integrated Fire Control (IFC) complex and provided barracks and support for crews manning the 661st radar unit and Radar Approach Control (RAPCON) and later Nike facilities.² They were built from plans provided by the Butler Manufacturing Company of Indianapolis to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,³ and form part of the Army Air Defense Command (ADC) district that occupies a distinct complex in the southwestern portion of Selfridge, self contained and isolated from the rest of the base for functional and security reasons.

Buildings #1582-1585, barracks and support structures for complex personnel, later housed the base K-9 Corps.⁴ Guard dogs were brought onto U.S. military installations and Nike bases to increase security after Hercules missiles replace the Ajax, and were commonly quartered adjacent to Nike IFC and launch

¹Master Building List, on file, Selfridge Base Civil Engineers Office

²Interview, Colonel Robert Stone (ret.) Selfridge Base Museum Curator, August 27, 1995.

³Butler Manufacturing Company, "Prefabricated Building," Plans on file, Selfridge Base Museum

⁴Interview, Colonel Robert Stone, Curator Selfridge Base Museum, August 27, 1995

facilities. In recent years the #1580s series buildings housed the base Rod and Gun Club. The missiles and launchers have been removed from the Nike batteries at Selfridge and the subsurface components filled in.

The 28th Artillery Group (Air Defense), a unit of the ADC under the control of NORAD, set up its headquarters at Selfridge in the southwest portion of the base in 1952.⁵ Initially in charge of administering the 90 millimeter gun emplacements for protecting cities such as Detroit, it was later assigned the responsibility of providing combat-ready air defense missile units for defense of the Detroit-Cleveland area and administered Nike missile battalions at Selfridge and others ringing Detroit and Cleveland.⁶ In 1969, the Nike missiles were removed from Selfridge and the remaining 28th Artillery Group administrative personnel were moved from the original location in the southwest corner of base to an area adjacent to 661st Radar Squadron.⁷ The 28th Artillery Group was deactivated 1974.⁸ The regional Nike headquarters and command structures were housed in buildings #1515 to #1537.

⁵Anonymous, History of Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, 1967, p.11.

⁶Ibid., p.11.

⁷ Nigro, Louis, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, An Unofficial History, 1977, p. 19.

⁸Ibid., p. 19.

In addition to missiles at Selfridge, the Detroit area firing batteries were located at Utica (Battery A), Carleton (Battery C) and Union Lake (Battery C). Cleveland sites were located near Painesville, Bratenahl, and Fairview Park.⁹ These batteries initially used Nike Ajax missiles but later adopted the more advanced Nike Hercules missiles.

Records of the Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, provided information on the national level for Nike facilities during the period 1954-1974 (when the last Nikes were deactivated). Approximately 300 Nike sites are identified in 30 states, including 15 in Michigan and 94 in states within a 300 mile radius. The Detroit District Corps of Engineers under the DERP/FUDS program identified 170 Formerly Used Defense Sites in Michigan, most dating to Cold War, 15 of which are Nike silos. A consultant study completed over ten years ago identified about 300 Nike sites nationally.

III. DESCRIPTION

Buildings #1582, #1583, and #1584 are rectangular plan, 20 foot wide by 48

⁹Anonymous, Selfridge Air Force Base, Distinguished Visitors Edition, 1977, p.11.

foot 8 inch deep, front-gabled, single-story, metal prefabricated structures. They rest on concrete slab foundations and consist of steel frames upon which are bolted ribbed steel panel walls and roofs. These buildings are examples of a standardized plan "Prefab Metal Storage Building" produced by the Butler Manufacturing Company. The piercing pattern of the component buildings are explicitly symmetrical in composition. The principal (north) elevation consists of three bays formed by a central steel pedestrian entry door flanked by steel window sash. The side elevations consists of six bays defined by steel sash windows. The standard prefabricated rear elevations were originally identical to the facade but in this complex the steel prefabricated bays are joined by a single story steel framed, hipped roof, dependency clad in corrugated metal panels. This corridor lining the three buildings together also links them to the concrete block Building #1585.

The interior plans of all but Building #1583 are open unobstructed space. The northern portion of Building #1583 is divided by frame partition walls into a 17 by 19 foot room.

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Anonymous, Guide and Directory, Selfridge Air Force Base, Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, 1960.

_____, History of Selfridge Air Force Base, Michigan, unpublished ms., Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 1967.

_____, Selfridge Air Force Base, Distinguished Visitors Edition, 1977, on file Base Public Information Office.

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Great Lakes Research, Historic American Engineering Record, HAER MI-80, Newport Nike Missile Battery D-57/58. Great Lakes Research, Williamston, Michigan, 1994.

Nigro, Louis, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, An Unofficial History, unpublished ms., Public Information Office, Selfridge ANG Base, Michigan, 1977.

B. PLANS

Photographic copy of floor plan drawing, dated August 10, 1968, Selfridge ANG Base, in possession of Selfridge Base Museum, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. Floor Plans Bldgs. 1582 & 1584.

Photographic copy of floor plan drawing, dated September 26, 1975, Selfridge ANG Base, in possession of Selfridge Base Museum, Mt. Clemens, Michigan. Floor Plan Bldg. 1583.

C. INTERVIEWS

Colonel Robert Stone (Ret.), Curator, Selfridge Base Museum, October 13, 1995.

Eric Reeve, Selfridge Environmental Management, October 12, 1995.

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Interview, John Rynkowski, Selfridge Environmental Management
(former serviceman at Selfridge during 1960s), October 27, 1995.